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THE LANGUAGE AND AREA SCHOOL

A brief description

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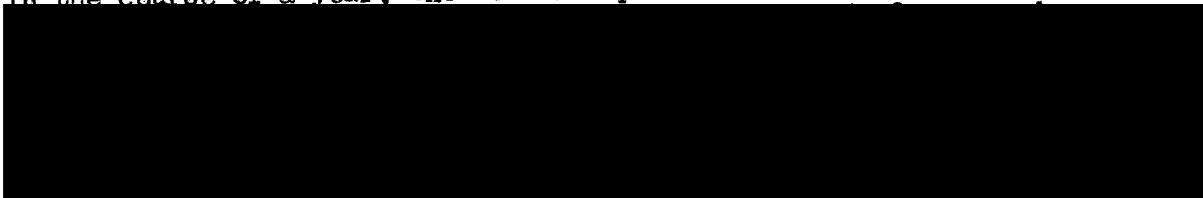
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THE LANGUAGE AND AREA SCHOOL

An Introduction

The Language and Area School has existed, under several names, since 1951. Its activities began with (a) three full-time scientific linguists conducting a few part-time classes chiefly in the "world languages" for a small number of Agency employees, and (b) a prominent academician concerned with making opportunities for Agency employees to study with academic area specialists on a part-time and limited basis. Early activities were characterized by academic quality and professionalism but were only coincidentally related to the ever-day tasks of the masses of Agency employees. Intensive training was accomplished by expensive and generally unsatisfactory arrangements with universities. With experience, experimentation, constructive cooperation between the School and Agency components, development of "training" rather than "educational" perspectives, growth within the Agency of recognition that language facility and area knowledge are indispensable elements of professionalism, and provision of the quantity and quality of personnel needed to provide desirable training, the School, during the following thirteen years, has developed training that is efficient, effective and practically oriented to Agency activities. In the course of a year, the School supervises and conducts nearly 400

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serve as volunteer instructors in early morning and evening classes.

The School is organized, under Office of the Chief, as two major components -- for language training and for area training -- each supervised by a Deputy Chief of the School. The Area Program is conducted by three chief instructors, each concerned with a major world region. The Language Program is conducted through six regional language departments and one department for special projects. These units are staffed by staff and contract employees. Identification of all units and persons affiliated therewith is attached hereto.

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The significant activities of the School are described in summary form by the two memoranda that accompany this introduction.

In addition to the principal activities, the School has developed a human relations program concerned mainly with the special considerations for maximum professional effectiveness in cross-cultural interpersonal relations. The perspectives are those of the behavioral social and medical sciences. The calibre is sophisticated, intended for middle and senior officers. Though highly acclaimed by most participants, the course has fallen by the wayside. Its development, however, has significantly influenced all area training and has brought about repeated contributions to several other courses in the Agency. Topics deal with national character, foreign images, considerations in understanding and influencing people of other cultures, personal characteristics for effective work abroad, human relations and effective liaison, and other related topics.

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SUMMARY OF LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAM

LANGUAGE AND AREA SCHOOL

12 March 1964

General Information

Agency language training is provided by: duty-hour classes, tutorial instruction, and non-duty hour voluntary classes. Approximately 1100 students a year receive training.

Staff

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staff instructors supervise 7 departments: African Languages, Far Eastern Languages, Near Eastern Languages, Germanic Languages, Romance Languages, Slavic and East European Languages, and Special Projects Department. Tutorial instructors are hired under contracts on an hourly basis and are supervised by Special Projects and the pertinent language department head. Instructors in the Voluntary Language Training Program (VLTP) are mostly staff employees of the Agency with necessary linguistic qualifications. Instructor training, curriculum development, and training materials production for the VLTP are provided by the regular language departments through the Coordinator of the Voluntary Language Training Program. Language laboratory facilities exist in the Headquarters Building and in [REDACTED]. The Language and Area School can give instruction in 49 languages.

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Directed Training

Regular daytime language classes have been conducted by the Language and Area School since early 1953. Initially all classes were part-time and limited in extent. Full-time classes began in 1955 when it became possible to employ contract instructors. Each course is planned and conducted under the supervision of a scientific linguist. Generally we emphasize spoken language training and use the latest professional techniques and equipment. A vital and time-consuming part of the scientific linguist's work is the preparation and revision of classroom texts, language tapes, and other instructional materials for all programs. Usually, contract instructors are native speakers of the language which they are instructing, and it is this group which carries out the bulk of the

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classroom exercises. It is the responsibility of the scientific linguist to select, train, and supervise the contract instructors in carrying out their teaching duties. In addition, the daytime staff provides total support and all the varied facilities required to conduct tutorial and voluntary instruction, such as professional supervision, administrative support, research and development, production of texts and tapes, and instructor training.

Full-time classes vary in length according to difficulty, from 20 weeks to 48 weeks. Part-time classes generally run from 10 to 20 weeks. Several consecutive part-time classes may equal a single full-time class.

The number of students trained in the duty-hour program has remained fairly constant at about 500 a year. However, class hours taught in Fiscal Year 1962 (17,783 class hours) increased by 43% in Fiscal Year 1963 (25,517 class hours). A comparable increase appears probable this year. 110 classes were taught in FY 63, with an enrollment of 477 students, while in the first half of FY 64, 74 classes with an enrollment of 256 students have been taught. The expected increases can probably be handled without extra cost since most classes have not yet reached maximum enrollment. In all daytime classes, except Russian (primarily reading courses for DD/I components), DD/P participation is approximately 70% and other components about 30%.

Under the heading of "Directed Training" the Tutorial Program has become a significant part of the instruction. The decision was made in January 1960 to supplement directed training efforts by using WAE tutors to meet unusual and difficult requirements that could not be met by normal means. The principal purposes of this group of tutorial instructors were:

- a. To train employees whose security condition excluded them from regular classes.
- b. To provide quick refresher training before departure overseas.
- c. To provide instruction in languages for which the requirement was so small that regular staff facilities could not be maintained economically.
- d. To train students who had already begun the study of the language on a short-term basis to equip them for entry into classes at a higher level.

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Prior to 1960, many of these requirements had been serviced at commercial and academic institutions. Tutorial training permitted LAS to service these requirements more securely and economically. The Language and Area School now has available approximately [REDACTED] with competences in some 40 languages. Approximately [REDACTED] currently under contract. As requests for tutorial services have become increasingly frequent, every effort has been made to keep the cost down by channeling as many students as possible into regular classes. The peak monthly cost of the Tutorial Program was reached in April 1963 when tutorial services cost \$8,225. At present the program has leveled off at approximately \$4,500 a month. Although the LAS/TR has budgeted for this program, the Agency Budget Office is now developing a procedure to finance tutorial training.

An incidental benefit of the tutorial roster has been the availability of tutors for other services to the Agency, such as assistance provided to DDP/Systems Group (formerly MMU) Name Grouping Project. About 15 to 20 tutors have participated in this program which began in March 1961. They also have done translation for other offices of the Agency and transliteration projects for DD/P, RID. They have aided materially in the Agency's language proficiency testing program. If the trend in the first half of Fiscal 1964 continues, there will occur a drop of 40% in use of tutorial training during Fiscal Year 1964. Approximately 80% of those trained tutorially are from DD/P components.

Voluntary Language Training Program

The Voluntary Program originated in 1957 concurrently with the Language Development Program, which included awards for attainment of proficiency in foreign languages. The teaching staff for these 5-hour-per-week classes is recruited on an overtime basis from among employees of the Agency at large. The program began in 1957 with 20 classes in 7 languages, and increased to a peak of 54 classes with 430 students in 1959. The bulk of the enrollment has always been in the Western European languages and Russian. At one point, the spring of 1960, when the imbalance between the common languages and others became great, beginning classes in German, Italian, French, and Spanish were phased out and not taught until the spring of 1961 when beginning classes in these languages were again organized. The basic impact of this program has been to strengthen the overall language competence of the Agency, providing usable low-level competences for immediate use and materially cutting the lead time necessary for training many others to professional competence for overseas service. The

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cost has rarely exceeded \$35,000 to \$40,000 a year, or the equivalent of 3 middle-grade professional employees. In Fiscal Year 1964 the Office of Training has not budgeted for this program; efforts are being made to administer financing by the using components. While more careful screening of VLTP applicants has resulted from this budgetary limitation, total enrollments have remained about the same. In the past 7 years [REDACTED] have been taught in the VLTP. Approximately 65% of the students in the program are from DD/P and 35% from other components of the Agency.

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Language Proficiency Testing

25X1A The School's one non-teaching function is provision of language proficiency testing services to the Agency. The language proficiency testing activity was developed in 1956 and initiated as a large-scale program to support the Language Development Program in 1957. Objective tests were provided in 36 languages with other tests available for less common languages. The proficiency testing program has, by and large, followed the fortunes of the language awards program in terms of volume of testing accomplished, with the peak occurring in Fiscal 59 and 60. In the 7 years of testing activity, well over [REDACTED] tests have been administered. Since the beginning of Fiscal 63 the Agency has been contracting with the Modern Language Association of America and the Educational Testing Service for the development of spoken and written language proficiency tests that will be more easily administrable away from Headquarters and that will provide an objective and uniform measure of language proficiency for other Government agencies as well as CIA. This project was jointly financed by AID, Department of Defense, and the Agency. Validation testing is currently being completed on 2 tests each in French and Spanish. Russian tests are in the process of development and will be given preliminary testing within the next 2 to 3 months. This project is a good example of the effectiveness of the high level of interagency cooperation which has existed for many years. This cooperation has been possible because of the development of the Interagency Language Roundtable, an informal group of heads of language training in various agencies of government which meets once a month to discuss common problems and to eliminate duplication where possible among the government's language training facilities.

Language Policy

Recently, as a result of the request of DD/S, a study has been submitted examining the newly-adopted joint State-USIA policy and

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its implications on foreign language proficiency within the Agency. This study proposes the formulation of a parallel policy for the Agency to ensure that the Agency may stay abreast of other government agencies in this important aspect of training for overseas service. Action is currently pending on the proposal.

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